



Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsmen & Conservationists

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On the Front Lines – So You Can Be in the Woods, On the Water or At the Range!

Transcript provided courtesy of Pennsylvania Legislative Services

House Game & Fisheries Committee

06/03/2025, 9:00 a.m., Room 515, Irvis Office Building

Pennsylvania Legislative Services

The committee met to consider legislation.

Chairman Anita Astorino Kulik (D-Allegheny) opened the meeting by welcoming the committee members.

SB 518 – (PN 481) Amends Title 34 (Game), in game or wildlife protection, further providing for unlawful activities and for killing game or wildlife to protect person; and, in hunting and furtaking, further providing for investigation and seizure of game or wildlife. Repeals language regarding the refusal to answer any pertinent question related to the killing or wounding of any game or wildlife killed or wounded, or the disposition of the entire carcass or any part thereof under § 2126 regarding unlawful activities, under §2141 related to killing game or wildlife to protect person and under §2313 related to investigation and seizure of game or wildlife. Effective in 60 days. The bill was unanimously **reported as committed**.

A00847, by Maloney, requires the Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) officers to recognize private property and only allows for trespassing if no clear notice is provided or a warrant is issued. The amendment was **passed over**.

About the bill, Sen. Greg Rothman (R-Cumberland), the bill's prime sponsor, highlighted SB 518's intent to eliminate sections that conflict with constitutional rights regarding self-incrimination and mentioned PGC's support.

Regarding A00847, Minority Chairman David Maloney (R-Berks) stated he appreciates the bill, but that there is "another consideration of a problem for sportsmen and landowners." He added that his intention with the amendment is to address "open field stock." Chairman Kulik deemed the amendment "out of order" for not being timely filed.

Despite acknowledging the issue and expecting the outcome, Chairman Maloney emphasized the delay was due to procedural delays within the Legislative Reference Bureau (LRB), stating they are "swamped." He added he possesses a "certificate of the amendment being filed on time" and asked for a vote to suspend the House Rules, which failed.

On the bill itself, Chairman Maloney expressed his support, calling it "long overdue."

HB 1507 – (PN 1762) Amends Title 34 (Game), in hunting and furtaking licenses, further providing for resident license and fee exemptions. Establishes that a college student who attends a college or university located within the state is eligible for a resident hunting license if the student has applied to an issuing agent or the commission, provides a valid college identification card and pays the license fee. Adds that a college student may be eligible for license and fee exemptions for no more than four consecutive years. Effective in 60 days. The bill was unanimously **reported as committed**.

A00841, by Maloney, enables non-residents to receive PA resident hunting licenses if they pay property taxes within the state. The amendment was **passed over**.

Rep. Mandy Steele (D-Allegheny), the bill's prime sponsor, spoke in favor of the bill, emphasizing its potential to make hunting more accessible to financially struggling college students.

Chairman Maloney stated he supports the bill despite "never once" hearing about these issues "from an out-of-stater or otherwise a parent in-state going out-of-state, the other way." Chairman Maloney also mentioned a similar procedural issue within LRB that caused a delay in processing A00841 on time and requested a suspension of the House Rules. Chairman Kulik again declared A00841 "out of order" and asserted it did not meet the deadline. She continued with a vote to suspend the House Rules, which failed.

HB 1431 - (PN 1667) Amends Title 34 (Game), in Pennsylvania Game Commission, further providing for organization of commission; in game or wildlife protection, further providing for regulations, for report to commission officer, for surrender of carcass to commission officer and for unlawful activities; and, in hunting and furtaking, repealing provisions relating to hunting on Sunday prohibited, further providing for unlawful devices and methods and for the offense of trespass on private property while hunting and repealing provisions relating to hunting on Sunday without written permission. Requires the governor to ensure that at least one member of the Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) represents the interest of agricultural commodities that pertain to normal agricultural operations and wildlife. Provides definitions. Requires reports to PGC officers regarding the killing of game or wildlife to include the location of the carcass. Asserts PGC will establish a self-reporting system that assigns an individual to remove deer for crop damage purposes and reports each harvest to a PGC officer via a telephone number, online application or public website. Asserts carcasses will be delivered to a processor for final disposition. Outlines violations, including for the failure to obtain written permission to hunt on a Sunday. Asserts that violations under this subchapter pertaining to written permission are considered third-degree summary offenses. Outlines exceptions to subsection (a) pertaining to unlawful devices and methods. Adds situations that are classified as trespassing. Amends penalty information, including the forfeiture of hunting within the commonwealth for various periods of time. Effective in 60 days. The bill was **reported as committed** with Chairman Maloney and Reps. Jake Banta (R-Erie), Bud Cook (R-Washington), Eric Davanzo (R-Westmoreland), Andrew Kuzma (R-Allegheny), Jeff Olsommer (R-Wayne), Chad Reichard (R-Franklin), Brian Smith (R-Jefferson) and Parke Wentling (R-Mercer) voting in the negative.

A00747, by Maloney, provides for the nomination and selection of PGC commissioners by a vote of the sportsmen and sportsmen groups. The amendment **failed**, on a party-line vote, with Democrats voting in the negative.

A00751, by Smith, sets in statute the opening day of deer rifle season as the first Monday following Thanksgiving. The amendment **failed**, on a party-line vote, with Democrats voting in the negative.

A00753, by Maloney, bans the use of High-PAH sealants, like asphalt, on PGC properties. The amendment **failed**, on a party-line vote, with Democrats voting in the negative.

A00754, by Maloney, bans the use of glyphosate herbicides on PGC properties. The amendment **failed**, on a party-line vote, with Democrats voting in the negative.

Regarding A00747, Chairman Maloney mentioned its importance for sportsmen. He continued, stating that having sportsmen be "engaged in the process of commissioners is about the most common-sense piece of opportunity for them."

On A00751, Rep. Smith argued for changing the deer season opener back to Monday, mentioning negative impacts on hunters and businesses, a lack of economic impact research by the PGC and division among

hunters. He also mentioned how PGC's executive director, Stephen Smith, "stated on record he could not link any hunting license sales increase to the opener change."

Rep. Banta expressed strong support for reverting to the traditional Monday start, sharing personal anecdotes from Erie County and emphasizing requests he received to change back.

Regarding A00753, Chairman Maloney described it as a "common-sense" measure aimed at addressing environmental concerns.

On A00754, Chairman Maloney discussed the conflict surrounding the bill due to "special interest" involvement with game management and emphasized the harmful effects of glyphosate, including negative impacts on Pennsylvania's bees. He stated A00754's purpose is to protect wildlife.

Chairman Kulik expressed her desire to continue discussions on that topic and mentioned "perhaps looking at a separate standing bill on this."

Regarding her bill, Rep. Steele expressed excitement about sponsoring a bill promoting Sunday hunting, mentioning benefits for family education, farmer relief, wildlife management and forest ecology. She highlighted the collaboration between the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau (PFB), PGC and other advocacy groups, emphasizing the importance of lifting the prohibition on Sunday hunting.

Rep. Banta asked about the legality of entering another's property to retrieve a dog in the context of the Sunday hunting bill. Paul Scott, majority executive director, stated that the current legislation does not change the existing provision in Title 34 regarding the retrieval of dogs from someone else's property.

Chairman Maloney discussed the issue of trespassing under the guise of retrieving a dog, the increase in trespass penalties and the inconsistency in enforcement across the state. He criticized the approach to wildlife management, Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) and the allocation of doe tags, questioning the effectiveness of adding another weekend day for hunting. Chairman Maloney also expressed concerns over the loss of waterfowl hunting opportunities due to Sunday hunting. He urged a negative vote on the bill, stating the need to avoid complicating the issue further.

Rep. Steele reiterated her bill has the "full support" of various Pennsylvania organizations, including PGC, PFB, Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, the Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsmen & Conservationists (PFSC) and Hunter Nation.

Chairman Kulik concluded the meeting by thanking the members for their participation during a busy period. She also mentioned that there would not be a voting meeting the following week due to Zoo Day, before adjourning the meeting.